

## What Makes a Hero? English 101: 10J

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Fall 2005  
T/Th 10-11:15 am  
Green Room in Tarbutton Hall

Office hours: Thursday 11:30 am - 3:30 pm in my office, Humanities Building 205, and by appointment (requested 24 hours in advance) on Tuesday morning.

### Content and Goals:

In this course, we will investigate and debate heroism by writing on and discussing questions such as: What makes a hero? Who is defined as a hero? What must an ordinary person do to be redefined as a hero? Is heroism gendered? What is the difference between celebrity and heroism? Is heroism culture-bound, changing over time and location, or are there universally heroic traits? We will examine a wide range of materials, from epics to comic books, *Buffy* to *The West Wing*. This range will allow you experience writing on a variety of media while providing in-depth work on grammar, usage, and style. This course is not designed as a comprehensive overview of heroism across time and space, but instead a sampling of a few key texts and ideas. I have divided the course into four key themes: Current Uses of "Hero," Hero and Mythology, Female Heroism, Superheroism, and Passive Heroism.

Students will improve their writing through prewriting, writing, and rewriting, focusing on grammar, structure, and analysis. You will also practice finding and correctly citing sources by using some of the library's electronic research tools, writing annotated bibliographies, and incorporating outside information and arguments in your papers. We will also increase your comfort-level with public speaking in classroom discussion and an oral report. Our classroom should be a place for respectful, civil, and passionate discussion of ideas and opinions.

### Required Texts:

Four texts are available at the bookstore and are required. You may buy them used, but make sure the editions are correct and that you have the books well before we are reading them for class.

--*The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. ISBN: 020530902X

--*Maus* by Art Spiegelman. There are several editions of this book, so make sure you have the complete edition, with part I: *My Father Bleeds History* and part II: *And Here My Troubles Began*. You can buy the two parts separately or in a boxed set with this ISBN: 0679748407.

--*Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones. ISBN: 006441034X

--*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. ISBN: 0873529863 You will be expected to use MLA formatting for all papers, so will need this as a reference.

You will also be responsible for purchasing on your own three comic books (in a series) or one graphic novel of your choice that includes superhero character or characters.

### Other Materials:

All other readings are available through the library's electronic reserve system, found at <https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/reserves/>. These should be read and a printed copy brought to class with you on the day(s) assigned. They include: essays by Lord Raglan and Dean A. Miller, excerpts from two versions of Arthurian legends, and other essays as time allows. You will also be asked occasionally to find and bring to class articles or examples for discussion.

We will also watch episodes of *The West Wing* and *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* and the movie *X-Men*, based on the Marvel comic.

### Assignments:

*Conference postings:* These postings to our Learnlink conference are due at midnight Sunday night, beginning September 11. Each posting consists of approximately 250 words that show your thoughts on the readings for Tuesday's class or the previous week's discussion, in response to a prompt posted by your instructor. These are not as formal as a paper and you should feel free to experiment with ideas or directions that intrigue you; however, you are expected to observe rules of grammar, style, and propriety.

*Annotated Bibliographies:* You have two annotated bibliographies during the semester, one of which will be on the same topic as your final research paper. Each includes at least 5 sources, due Oct. 6 and Nov. 22.

*Papers:* All papers should be submitted stapled in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and will not be accepted via email. They must follow all points of MLA formatting as found in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. You will be responsible for bringing completed rough drafts to class for workshops, so make sure you think ahead about your writing.

- 3 page paper on 9/11 use of "hero" or celebrity vs. heroism due Sept. 22
- In-class writing on applying Raglan or Miller's article on Oct. 6
- 5-7 page research paper on female heroism due Nov. 3
- In-class writing assignment on *X-Men* on Nov. 17
- 7-9 page research paper on your own definition of heroism or a topic of your own devising approved by teacher, due Dec. 13 in final portfolio.
- Final portfolio with accompanying 2 page reflective essay explaining your revisions and why this represents your best work due Dec. 13.

*Oral Report:* This 5-minute oral report is on the same topic as your final paper, presenting your research and original ideas to the class. You are not expected to create a visual presentation (such as PowerPoint), but should consider your overall style and organization, as they will be evaluated alongside content.

*Final Portfolio:* Your final portfolio consists of all the formal writing you have done throughout the semester, including the drafts that have been worked on in class and the comments of your instructor and classmates, so **save your work**. The portfolio will also include your selection of your best informal class writings (from the learnlink postings or in-class essays).

*Participation:* You are expected to fully participate in class. Full participation includes attending class every day with all your materials, having closely read and thought about the assigned readings, and being ready to discuss them in depth with your classmates. If any of this will prove a hardship for you, please talk with me immediately about making other arrangements for this portion of your grade.

*Extra credit:* At various points in the semester, I will offer you the chance to earn extra credit as a part of your participation grade. These will include attending and writing up certain public lectures, completing on-line assignments, or preparing additional items for class.

### **Grading policy:**

The final two pages of this syllabus are a copy of the grading sheet that I use to evaluate your papers (and you will use a similar one during draft workshops). An "A" paper is one whose attributes consistently fall into the "excellent" category, a "B" paper into the "above average" category, a "C" paper into the "average" category, and so on. Plus and minus grades will be given to papers whose attributes consistently fall between categories. Your final grade will be assigned on the plus/minus system.

### **Late Policy:**

Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned. You must hand in a hard-copy—emailing a paper is not acceptable except when approved in advance by the instructor due to an absence. Late papers are accepted, but are penalized one grade level for each 24 hours they are late, beginning at the due time. Thus a paper turned in after class on the day it is due will be penalized one 24-hour time period and therefore one grade level. I strongly encourage you to turn papers in on time as it is a simple way to keep your grades up. Rare extensions may be obtained for demonstrable hardship discussed with the instructor—however, no extensions will be granted within 24 hours of an assignment's due date or for computer malfunctions (so back up your work and leave yourself plenty of time for printer problems).

**Attendance policy:**

Poor attendance negatively affects your grade. After three unexcused absences, your final grade will lower one level—an A- will become a B+, for example, after four unexcused absences. An excused absence must be requested and excused *before* class begins the day you are absent. Class will begin at 10 am; if you arrive after 10:05 without prior notice to the teacher, you will be counted as tardy. Three unexcused tardies equal one unexcused absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate and any handouts from me as well as turning in any assignments due that day before class time.

**Citation/plagiarism:**

The Oxford Honor Code is in effect in this class and the instructor takes violations very seriously. Students are expected to adhere to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity it outlines and will be held responsible for any violations. A copy of the relevant portions of the code is attached to this syllabus and is also available online at <http://www.emory.edu/OXFORD/CampusLife/Policies/honor.html>. Any suspected plagiarism will be turned over to the Honor Council for disciplinary action by the University.

**Writing Center and Peer Assistance:**

For this class, I ask that you do NOT use peer assistance in editing your papers except during our in-class draft workshops. Instead, please familiarize yourself with the Writing Center, Language Hall first floor, where you can receive help on all aspects of writing, from brainstorming and thesis formation to organization and revision. You may visit them as often as necessary for any given paper, but they are the only outside help other than your instructor you may receive. The Atlanta campus also has a useful website at [www.emory.edu/English/WC](http://www.emory.edu/English/WC).

**Accessibility:**

Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need classroom or other accommodations, please discuss this with me as soon as possible. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

**Class Schedule**

Thursday, Sept. 1

Introduction and overview of the syllabus. Short writing assignment on “What is a hero?”

**Current Uses of “Hero”**

Tuesday, Sept. 6

Discussion on heroism from your papers

Lesson on LexisNexis and how to access e-reserves

(Wednesday, Sept. 7 is last day for drop-add)

Thursday, Sept. 8

Watching the 9/11 episode of *The West Wing* and discussion. [Meet in the Humanities multimedia room.](#)

Sunday, Sept. 11

**First Learnlink conference posting due at midnight**

Tuesday, Sept. 13

**Bring in an article** on 9/11/01 and the use of “hero” for discussion.  
Handout: 3 page paper assignment

Thursday, Sept. 15

**Bring in article** on celebrity vs. heroism for discussion and **preliminary thesis statement**

Tuesday, Sept. 20

**Draft workshop: Bring in a complete rough draft** of your 3 page paper for peer evaluation.

### **Hero and Mythology**

Thursday, Sept. 22

**3-page paper due at beginning of class**

Library orientation. [Meet in the Conference Room of the library.](#)  
Handout: Annotated bibliography assignment

Tuesday, Sept. 27

“The Hero” by Lord Raglan from *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama*, pp. 178-208  
and “Aspects of the Quest” by Dean A. Miller from *The Epic Hero*, pp. 162-76.

Thursday, Sept. 29

Discussion of Arthurian legends. “King Arthur” from *The History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Tuesday, Oct. 4

Continued discussion of Arthurian legends. All reserve readings by Sir Thomas Malory from *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

Thursday, Oct. 6

**Annotated bibliography due at beginning of class**

**Graded in-class writing** on applying Raglan and Miller’s arguments to the Arthurian legends.  
[Meet in the Humanities multimedia room.](#)

Tuesday, Oct. 11

Midsemester Break—No class

*Remember to find three comic books in a series or one graphic novel for the first week of November!*

### **Female Heroism**

Thursday, Oct. 13

Watching *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* episodes. This class is scheduled 7-9:30 pm, so that we have enough time to watch 2 episodes. Attendance is required in the [Humanities multimedia room](#).

Tuesday, Oct. 18

Discussion of *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* episodes and female heroism  
Handout: 5-7 page paper assignment

Thursday, Oct. 20  
*Howl's Moving Castle*, Ch. 1-6

Tuesday, Oct. 25  
*Howl's Moving Castle*, Ch. 7-16

Thursday, Oct. 27  
*Howl's Moving Castle*, Ch. 17-end

Tuesday, Nov. 1  
**Draft workshop: Bring in complete rough draft** of your 5-7 page paper.

### Superheroism

Thursday, Nov. 3  
**5-7 page paper due at beginning of class.**  
"Heroes and Superheroes" by Jeph Loeb and Tom Morris from *Superheroes and Philosophy: Truth, Justice, and the Socratic Way*, pp. 11-20.

Tuesday, Nov. 8  
Read three comic books in a series or one graphic novel with superhero characters and bring them to class for discussion.  
Handout: Assignment for final 7-8 page research paper, oral report, and final portfolio.  
**NOTE:** You are responsible for meeting with your instructor to have your final research paper topic approved by Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 5 pm.

Thursday, Nov. 10  
This class is scheduled for 7-9:30 pm, so that we have enough time to watch *X-Men*.  
Attendance is required at the Kaleidoscope lab in Pierce Hall.

Tuesday, Nov. 15  
Discussion on *X-Men*

Thursday, Nov. 17  
**Graded in-class writing** assignment on superheroism in *X-Men* and comic books/graphic novel. Your notes from the film viewing and comic books/graphic novel are permitted. Meet in the Humanities building's multimedia room.

### Passive Heroism

Tuesday, Nov. 22  
**Annotated bibliography for final research paper due**  
*Maus*, part I: *My Father Bleeds History*

Wednesday, Nov. 23-Sunday, Nov. 27  
Thanksgiving break

Tuesday, Nov. 29  
**Draft workshop** on complete draft of final research paper.

Thursday, Dec. 1  
**Revised draft due** (with previous drafts attached) to instructor at beginning of class  
*Maus*, part II: *And Here My Troubles Began*

Tuesday, Dec. 6  
Draft of research paper returned  
*Maus*, parts I & II

Thursday, Dec. 8  
Oral reports. Meet in Kaleidoscope lab in Pierce Hall

Tuesday, Dec. 13  
**Final portfolio (including final draft of research paper and 2 page reflective essay) due at beginning of class.**

Oral reports, if needed. Meet in Kaleidoscope lab in Pierce Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 14  
Reading Day

Dec. 15-16, 19-21  
Exams (no final exam for this course)